

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated May 7, 2003. Claims 15-31 are pending. No claims have been changed herein.

Claims 15-31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Percival in view of Sato (US 6,532,307 – newly cited). This Section 103(a) rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons (in addition to the substance of the rejection lacking merit).

Sato is not prior art. In particular, Sato was filed with the USPTO on July 28, 1999, well after the claimed priority date October 21, 1998 of the instant application. The certified copy of the priority document that has already been filed in this case is in English. Thus, it can be seen that the instant claimed inventions pre-date Sato. Sato cannot be used as prior art, and the Section 103 rejection must be withdrawn.

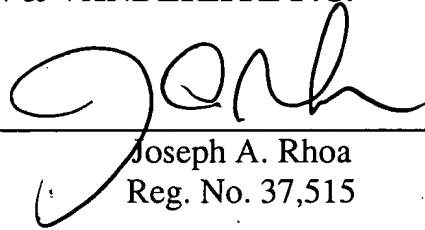
For at least the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully requested that all rejections be withdrawn. All claims are in condition for allowance. If any minor matter remains to be resolved, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned with regard to the same.

LARSSON et al
Appl. No. 09/418,323
August 7, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By: _____

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. Rhoa', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

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